

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 688

CS 206 665

AUTHOR Tesch, Robert C., Sr.
TITLE Determining the Success of Self-Paced Programmed Material for Learning English Grammar and Usage on a Business Communication Course.
PUB DATE Oct 81
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Business Communication Association (Phoenix, AZ, October 14-17, 1981).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business English; English Instruction; Grade Point Average; Higher Education; *Individualized Instruction; *Pacing; Predictive Measurement; *Predictor Variables; *Programed Instruction; Scores; Standardized Tests; Success; *Traditional Grammar; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify the factors that could predict students' achievement in English grammar and usage when instruction was self-paced and programed. The factors investigated were (1) student grade point average (GPA), (2) verbal student achievement test score (SAT), (3) quantitative SAT score and (4) total SAT score. Subjects were 131 students enrolled in five different sections of a required business communication course that were taught by three instructors who differed in amount of teaching experience and in educational preparation. Students in all sections were given a series of programed materials in grammar and usage and were told to work through them at their own pace. They were also told that a final examination based on the materials would be given. A one-way analysis of variance was performed in order to ensure that differences in student scores were not due to some factor related to the teacher. The analysis then proceeded using multiple regression techniques. Results revealed that the relationship between GPA and the grammar and usage test score was a moderate one. The verbal SAT, quantitative SAT, and total SAT scores had little effect in predicting student success in the grammar and usage test, while teacher differences also did not affect student scores. (FL)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED210688

DETERMINING THE SUCCESS OF SELF-PACED PROGRAMMED MATERIAL
FOR LEARNING ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND USAGE ON A
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSE

Robert C. Tesch, Sr.
Associate Professor
University of North Carolina-Greensboro

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

INTRODUCTION

Grammar and usage are important aspects of a Business Communication course at the collegiate level. In many colleges and universities one course must try and serve all the business communication needs of the students. Arno F. Knapper, University of Kansas, indicates that teaching good writing is a shared responsibility. One professional must teach writing and the other must teach the substantive content of mechanics, and method of presentation.[2] There are many topics in a Business Communication course that must be taught.

Some collegiate instructors may believe that secondary schools are or should be responsible for teaching grammar and usage. Arnold M. Tibbetts and Charlene Tibbetts, University of Illinois, studied fifty American high schools in 1976 and 1977. They found that "Since 1972 and 1973, most schools have reshaped and pruned their electives, giving more work in basic grammar and composition, particularly for the non-college bound." [5, p. 12] Collegiate instructors must work with students and/or be able to determine what basic mechanics and language skills are required of the students.

Changes in technology effect the emphasis upon course content. Some individuals believe that executives and managers will be utilizing word processing devices rather than the traditional secretarial

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Robert C. Tesch, Sr.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 206665-

approach to letter writing. Leonard B. Kruk, Montclair State College, believes Business Communication courses will be changed as a result of word processing. He states,

Most business communication is done in writing. Therefore, writing skills should still be emphasized. Basics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling should be taught. Executives in the future may no longer have a secretary to correct grammar or spelling.[3,p. 15]

Technology can be a great aid and/or deterrent to the businessperson. Many correction capabilities can be programmed into word processing devices, although, 'two, too, and to' are all machine correct.

C. B. Stiegler, Editor in Communication/English for South-Western Publishing Company, indicates that grammar, punctuation, and spelling are essential skills that form the foundation for effective written communication. Stiegler further states that there are many schools that do testing to determine the students' level of competency in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.[4] The question then becomes "What factors determine success in basic mechanics and language skills?"

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that could predict achievement in English grammar and usage when instruction was self-paced and programmed. The factors: (1) student grade point average (GPA), (2) verbal student achievement test (SAT) score, (3) quantitative SAT score, (4) total SAT score, and (5) class rank, were evaluated in relationship to success in grammar and usage.

PROCEDURES

The procedures in this study consisted of utilization of an instrument, a sample, and the statistical analysis. These three ideas will now be discussed in detail.

The Instrument

Joseph C. Blumenthal's series of programmed materials in grammar and usage were utilized. Due to the length of the course and amount of emphasis to be applied to grammar and usage, English 2200 was selected.[1] The text is accompanied by a test booklet. The final test was the instrument used in the statistical analysis.

The Sample

Business Communication 401 is a general course required for majors in Business Education in the College of Education at the University of Georgia. The course can also be used as a communication requirement for College of Business Administration students.

A total of 131 students, during the 1979-1980 school year, were administered Blumenthal's English 2200 final exam. The students were from five different class sections. The five sections were taught by three different instructors.

Instructor number one had two sections of 27 and 30 students. He had previously taught communication for four years and was an assistant professor. Instructor number two had two sections of 22 and 24 students. She was teaching communication for the first time and was completing her Doctor of Education degree. The third

instructor had one section of 29. She was teaching communication for the first time and completing her Master of Education degree. All three instructors informed the students to work through the English 2200 materials at their own pace. Near the end of the quarter (ten weeks) a final exam would be administered. The score a student would receive would result in bonus points to be added to his/her final grade average. The three instructors did no additional teaching of English grammar or usage.

Statistical Analysis

Utilizing SPSS, a one way analysis of variance was performed in order to ensure that differences in students' scores were not due to some factor related to the teacher. The analysis then proceeded using multiple regression techniques. The factors: (1) student GPA, (2) verbal SAT score, (3) quantitative SAT score, (4) total SAT score, and (5) class rank, were utilized in the regression analysis. The outcome was a regression equation that could be used in predicting success in the use of self-paced programmed instruction as one component of a business communication course.

FINDINGS

The data was obtained from three different instructors of five sections of a Business Communication course. Table 1 presents the F ratio at less than one. This indicates that different teachers did not effect the students' scores. If the F ratio had yielded a significant difference, then any additional analysis

would have been meaningless. The means and standard deviations for the students in the classes of the three instructors and totals are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 1
ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR TEACHERS

Sources of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F Ratio
Total	131		
Group	2	22.64	< 1
Error	129	51.97	

TABLE 2
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Groups	N	Mean	SD
Teacher 1	57	91.70	7.68
Teacher 2	46	91.48	7.27
Teacher 3	29	90.21	6.03
Total	132	91.30	7.21

The relationship between the GPA with the grammar/usage test score is a very moderate one ($R = .416$; $F = 27.15$, $p \leq .01$). Approximately 17% of the variance in success in grammar and usage can be explained by knowing the subjects' GPA. With the SAT score

added, the relationship between the combination of GPA and total SAT score with grammar/usage test score is still a very moderate one ($R = .437$; $F = 15.27$, $p \leq .01$). Approximately 19% of the variance in success in grammar and usage can be explained by knowing the subjects' GPA and total SAT score. The verbal SAT score, quantitative SAT score, and class rank added less than 1% of the explained variance. The equation:

$$Y' = 4.76 (A) + .008 (B) + 68.99$$

where A is GPA and B is total SAT score can be used as predicting Y' (grammar and usage test score) considering that only 19% of variance is explained by A and B. A summary of the regression analysis of the five factors appears in Table 3.

TABLE 3
REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE FACTORS

Factors	Multiple R	R Square
GPA	.4156	.1728
Total SAT	.4375	.1914
Class Rank	.4444	.1975
Verbal SAT	.4450	.1981
Quant. SAT	.4455	.1985

CONCLUSIONS

Three different instructors with three different levels of experience did not effect the scores of students on the grammar and usage test. The total mean was 91+ which appears to be rather

high. If the students were using the programmed materials as they should, then a 91+ score is reasonable.

One can view SAT scores as an achievement level obtained before entering college. Grade point average is a measure of obtainment earned at the conclusion of college courses. Utilizing these two assumptions, this study indicates that instruction has a very positive influence on student achievement in grammar and usage. Even though GPA accounted for only 17% of the explained variance, the various components of the SAT score added less than 3% of the explained variance. College courses do improve students' achievement scores.

The SAT is a national test that is used as an entrance requirement at many colleges and universities. In this study, the total SAT, verbal SAT, and quantitative SAT scores had very little affect in predicting success in English grammar and usage. Too many institutions of higher learning use the SAT or similar test scores as the main or only entrance requirement. Based upon this study, there can be and still is intellectual development throughout college. College instructors do have a positive influence upon their students.

Many business and industries say that college graduates cannot correctly apply language mechanics, spelling, and punctuation in their written work. Even though self-paced programmed materials relieve some of the headaches of teaching language skills, the instructor must integrate his/her teaching of language skills into all aspects of communication. Technology cannot determine the correct 'two, too, or to'.

REFERENCES

- 1 Blumenthal, Joseph C., English 2200, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.
- 2 Knapper, Arno F., "Good Writing - A Shared Responsibility," Journal of Business Communication, Vol 15, (Winter 1978), pp. 23-27.
- 3 Kruk, Leonard B., "Word Processing and its Implications for Business Communication Courses," Journal of Business Communication, Vol 15, (Spring 1978), pp. 9-18.
- 4 Stiegler, C. B. "Trends in the Content of the Basic Business Communication Course: An Editor's Viewpoint," The ABCA Bulletin, Vol 40, (June 1977), p. 17.
- 5 Tibbetts, Arnold M. and Tibbetts, Charlene, " 'Business English' in the American High School: Some Recent Observations," Journal of Business Communication, Vol 14, (Spring 1977), pp. 5-12.